

# NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANEA

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## Hoy's Pygmy Shrew in Illinois

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Hoy's pygmy shrew (*Microsorex hoyi hoyi*) was described nearly one hundred years ago by Spencer F. Baird (1857) from a specimen collected at Racine, Wisconsin by Dr. P. R. Hoy. The date of capture is unknown but it was entered in the records of the U. S. National Museum on 19 April, 1855

Since then specimens of Hoy's shrew have been taken in Iowa, Minnesota, Ontario, the Dakotas, Manitoba, British Columbia, and Alberta. There appear to be no further records from Wisconsin of *hoyi*, other specimens of pygmy shrews from northern Wisconsin belonging to the subspecies *M. h. intervectus*. The range of the seven races of *hoyi* have been mapped by Jackson (1928).

As the type locality of Hoy's shrew is Racine, Wisconsin, about fifty miles north of Chicago, it has always been expected that this shrew would some day be found in the Chicago Area. The Chicago Natural History Museum, the Chicago Academy of Sciences, students from the universities, and local mammalogists have carried on extensive trapping operations in northern Illinois at intervals over the past sixty years but without finding this rare shrew.

During the winter of 1948-1949 Douglas Tibbitts did experimental trapping on a farm near Palatine, Cook County, Illinois. About twelve mouse traps were kept set in the garage where white-footed mice were taken. For three weeks in January the traps caught nothing. On the 27th of January there were heavy rains followed by freezing weather on the 28th which covered the ground with a coat of *ice*. On the night of January 29-30 two small shrews were caught in the garage traps. Another was caught on the 31st. It is believed that the unfavorable icy condition had probably driven them to seek shelter and food in the garage.

On examination two of the shrews proved to be the long-tailed shrew (*Sorex cinereus cinereus* Kerr) and one Hoy's pygmy shrew (*Microsorex hoyi hoyi*

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Baird) . It measured for total length 77 mm., tail 29 mm., and hind foot 9.5 mm. The skull is badly broken but the tooth row is intact so definite

identification is possible. The dental characters of *Microsorex* have been best illustrated by Merriam (1895, pl. 9, fig. 5). Externally Hoy's shrew differed from the long-tailed shrews collected with it by the shorter tail and hind foot, the grayer upper parts, and the much lighter under side of the tail. The specimen is now No. 65567 in the collection of the Chicago Natural History Museum.

#### Literature Cited

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